

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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P R 171550Z JAN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4297  
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA  
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCHU

C O N F I D E N T I A L YAOUNDE 0244

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS 2 IMPDET  
TAGS: EG, SO, LT, IV  
SUBJECT: CAMEROON: VIEWS ON THE HORN

REF: (A) YAOUNDE 105 (B) STATE 1381

1. ON JANUARY 16 AS FOLLOW-UP TO MY CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENCY  
SECTY GEN EBOUA (REF A), I CALLED UPON PRESIDENT AHIDJO AND SPENT  
ABOUT FORTY MINUTES DISCUSSING WITH HIM THE PROBLEM OF THE  
AFRICAN HORN. I REVIEWED OUR DEEP CONCERN THAT A WAR WHICH CAUSES SO  
MUCH SUFFERING IS CONTINUING WITHOUT A SIGN OF SOLUTION FOR THE  
PROBLEMS WHICH BECOME MORE COMPLEX WITH TIME, AND OUR DETERMINATION  
TO SUPPORT OAU INITIATIVES IN WORKING TOWARD A SOLUTION, TO  
DISCOURAGE EXTERNAL INVOLVEMENT, AND NOT TO SUPPLY ARMS TO EITHER  
SIDE. WE REVIEWED THE IMPLICATIONS OF SETTLEMENT FOR ERITREA, FOR THE  
ARABS, FOR OAU, FOR THE PARTIES INVOLVED. AHIDJO, WHO HAS BEEN  
ASSOCIATED WITH THE OAU COMMISSION FOR RECONCILIATION, INDICATED HIS  
DISCOURAGEMENT. HE SEES THE IMAGE OF AFRICA AS DAMAGED BY ITS  
INABILITY TO STOP THE WAR AND SOLVE ITS PROBLEMS. SINCE ETHIOPIA  
DEFINES THE MATTER AS AN INTERNAL INSURRECTION WHICH SHE IS CAPABLE  
OF HANDLING HERSELF, THE COMMISSION LACKED AGREEMENT AS TO ITS  
JURISDICTION IN THE MATTER; NEVERTHELESS, THE OGADEN WOULD NOT  
ACCEPT ETHIOPIA'S CONTINUED AUTHORITY, NOW THAT THEY HAVE DRIVEN  
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OUT THE ETHIOPIANS. THE COMMISSION IS, IN PRINCIPLE, STILL IN  
EXISTENCE; IT COULD TRY AGAIN. BUT THE WILL TO USE IT REQUIRES  
GENERAL AGREEMENT AMONG OAU MEMBERS AS TO HOW TO SETTLE MATTERS. SUCH  
AN AGREEMENT BY OAU AT LARGE COULD FORCE THE TWO PARTIES TO  
ACCEPT AN OAU SOLUTION; BUT THERE IS TOO MUCH DIVISION AMONG THE  
MEMBERS OF OAU TO EXERT TH MORAL FORCE REQUIRED.

2. PRESIDENT AHIDJO POINTED OUT THAT THE SURROUNDING COUNTRIES WOULD NORMALLY BE EXPECTED TO TAKE THE LEAD IN EXERTING PRESSURE ON THE COMBATANTS, BUT EACH HAS PROBLEMS WITH ONE OF THE OTHER PARTIES. DJIBOUTI AND SUDAN HAVE THEIR OWN PROBLEMS WITH ETHIOPIA; EGYPT AND SUDAN SUPPORT SOMALIA AS A BROTHER ARAB STATE; KENYA AND SOMALIA'S BORDER PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN ESCALATING.

3. WHILE IN PRINCIPLE THE OAU IS COMMITTED TO MAINTAINING EXISTING BORDERS, THE EXPULSION OF ETHIOPIA FROM THE OGADEN IS NOW A FACT. THERE IS CONSIDERABLE DISINCLINATION TO TRY TO REVERSE RECENT HISTORY, EVEN IF IT WERE POSSIBLE TO FORCE THE SOMALIS TO YIELD THE OGADEN, WHICH AHIDJO SEES AS OUT OF THE QUESTION. HE HAS NO REAL EXPECTATION THAT A SEMIAUTONOMOUS OGADEN CAN BE PERSUADED TO FUNCTION WITHIN AN ETHIOPIAN FEDERATION OR CONFEDERATION.

4. I SUGGESTED THAT IF A SETTLEMENT IS SO DIFFICULT, PERHAPS IT WOULD MAKE SENSE TO SEEK A CEASE-FIRE, AFTER WHICH TERMS OF SETTLEMENT COULD BE SOUGHT, EVEN IF A SOLUTION SHOULD PROVE DIFFICULT, AS WITH THE KOREAN WAR IN THE 1950'S. AHIDJO EXPRESSED THE OPINION THAT IF THE USSR AND CUBA WOULD WITHDRAW FROM INVOLVEMENT, THE WAR WOULD HAVE TO STOP FOR LACK OF SUPPORT. BUT THERE ARE OAU COUNTRIES WHICH SUPPORT OUTSIDE INVOLVEMENT. HE ALSO MENTIONED IN PASSING THE RED CROSS AS A POSSIBLE MEDIATOR.

5. I NOTED THAT HIS LONG EXPERIENCE WITH RECONCILING WARRING FACTIONS, TOGETHER WITH HIS WISDOM IN UNTANGLING PROBLEMS SEEMED CONFIDENTIAL

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TO OFFER US A SOURCE OF ADVICE AS TO OUR APPROPRIATE ROLE, AND THAT HIS OBVIOUS PESSIMISM SUGGESTED THE MAGNITUDE OF THE TASK. PERHAPS EVEN UNUSUAL STEPS COULD BE DEvised, SUCH AS A NONPOLITICAL GROUP WHICH COULD BE VIEWED AS ABOVE IDEOLOGICAL AND NATIONAL INTERESTS; E.G., AN INTERNATIONAL COURT MADE UP OF SEVERAL DISTINGUISHED CHIEF JUSTICES OF NATIONS NOT INVOLVED IN THE MATTER WHICH MIGHT UNDERTAKE TO DISENTANGLE THE LEGAL ISSUES AND MAKE A JUDGMENT ON THE MERITS. HE RECEIVED THE IDEA AS NOT GREATLY DIFFERENT FROM THE ORIGINAL CONCEPT OF THE COMMISSION ON RECONCILIATION, BUT WORTH EXPLORING.

6. HE INDICATED THAT HE HAD SENT WORD TO THE GURC AMBASSADOR TO ADDIS ABABA, APPARENTLY IN RESPONSE TO MY MESSAGE ON THE SUBJECT (REFTEL A), THAT HE SHOULD DISCUSS THESE ISSUES WITH OAU SECRETARY GENERAL AND REPORT BACK. WHEN THERE IS NEWS TO SHARE, HE WILL LET ME KNOW. MEANWHILE HE APPROVES OF THE COURSE WE HAVE TAKEN IN AWAITING AFRICAN INITIATIVES. I EXPRESSED OUR SENSE OF FRUSTRATION AT HAVING NO CLEAR SENSE OF HOW THE LOSS OF LIFE COULD BE STOPPED AND OUR READINESS TO COOPERATE IN WHATEVER APPROACH WOULD STOP THE WAR WHICH IS POTENTIALLY SO DANGEROUS TO THE PEACE OF THE WORLD. HE AGREED THAT IT IS CERTAINLY AS DANGEROUS AS THE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. SINCE HE HAD

BEEN TOLD THAT HIS NEXT APPOINTMENT HAD ALREADY ARRIVED, I TOOK MY LEAVE AMID PROMISES THAT WE WOULD COMMUNICATE AGAIN WHEN EITHER HAD SOMETHING TO REPORT.

7. COMMENT: INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, EVEN THOUGH HE HAD AMPLE OPPORTUNITY TO DO SO WHEN HE MENTIONED SOVIET, CUBAN AND MOSLEM ROLE IN CONFLICT, PRESIDENT AHIDJO DID NOT SUGGEST DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN USSR AND US ON LIMITING THE INTRODUCTION OF FOREIGN TROOPS AND EQUIPMENT INTO THE AREA. THIS IS WHERE GURC FAULTED US IN OUR HANDLING OF ANGOLAN SITUATION. THE INVOLVEMENT OF IRAN AND THE ARABS ON THE SOMALI SIDE AND THE SOVIET UNION AND CUBA ON THE ETHIOPIAN GIVE AMPLE BASIS FOR PESSIMISM. UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES, WHILE OUR PRESENT POSITION "CORRECT" IT DOES NOT IN ITSELF CONTRIBUTE TO SOLUTION IN FACE OUTSIDE SUPPORT BY OTHERS. HOWEVER, AHIDJO  
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INDICATED THAT HE WOULD AWAIT RESULTS OF CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN OAU SECRETARY GENERAL WILLIAM ETEKI MBOUMOUA AND CAMEROONIAN AMBASSADOR ADDIS BEFORE OFFERING ANY SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS. AHIDJO, OBVIOUSLY TORN IN ATTEMPT SEEK NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT IN FACE OF ALL INDICATIONS OF CONTINUED BLOODSHED, THE HALLOWED OAU PRINCIPLES OF TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, AND NON-INTERFERENCE IN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS AND THE INVOLVEMENT OF AID DONORS (ARABS), WILL BE HARD PRESSED TO COME UP WITH VIABLE PROPOSALS.  
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